

# IMPROVING CHURCH COMMUNICATION



*Instructor's Guide*

Vibrant Church Renewal  
USA/Canada Evangelism Ministries  
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# IMPROVING CHURCH COMMUNICATION



**Instructor's Guide**

# I. INTRODUCTION

Use the following stories to show the importance of clear communication:

## Story 1:

An executive who had recently hired an English secretary had to go on a business trip to London. While he was away, a salesman who had never spoken to the new secretary made one of his periodic telephone calls to the executive's office. "Mr. Allen is in the United Kingdom," the secretary told him. The Salesman was shocked. "I'm terribly sorry," he said. "Is it too late to send flowers?"

## Story 2:

Two farmers were chatting in front of the bank. "I hear you made \$60,000 in alfalfa," said the first. Not wishing to be impolite his friend replied, "Well, that isn't quite right. It wasn't me, it was my brother, it wasn't alfalfa, but oats; not \$60,000 but \$6,000; and he didn't make it, he lost it."

Effective communication is vital to all relationships. It is especially important to relationships within the church and in our witnessing role with people outside the church.

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# PURPOSE

The purpose of this module is to raise the value of communication between church members and between the church and the world.

In this module we will explore ways to:

- Identify ways to improve the communication within the church.
- Gain insight in areas of communication with newcomers to our church.
- Learn to communicate more effectively with people outside the church.

## II. LESSON

### Section A. Improving Communication within the Church

The first step in improving Christian communication needs to begin within the walls of the church. So let's start there:

#### 1. Improving Communication through time spent together.

Read Acts 2:42-47

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in



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common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

A few things that we can note from the early Church:

- a. They spent time together in Bible study.
- b. They shared meals together.
- c. They prayed together regularly.
- d. They spent time in one another’s homes.
- e. They praised God together.
- f. Spending time together communicates what physical needs are present in community.



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## 2. Improving Communication through Openness.

- a. Love one another deeply (1 Peter 1:22).
  - Christian love is much more than a surface relationship.
  - Christlike love puts others first.
  - Verbalize your love for one another, show it, and put it in writing.
- b. Meet each other’s needs and practice hospitality (Romans 12:13).
  - Some people only share the needs they have with the people they know well.
  - Hospitality involves loving those who are different from us.
- c. Confess our sins to one another (James 5:16).
  - John Wesley’s bands practiced confession to trusted accountability friends.
  - Accountability to trusted friends fosters understanding.

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- d. Open wide your hearts to one another (2 Corinthians 6:12-13).
- Have passion for one another.
- Opening our hearts to one another makes us vulnerable.

### 3. Improving Communication through Trust.

- a. Increasing trust between friends improves communication.
- b. Communicating value in one another improves trust.
- c. Loving relationships are the foundation of trust.
- d. Acceptance of one another builds trust.
- e. Honest confession of faults builds confidence in one another and ultimately improves communication.
- f. “Being there” for one another in difficult times, builds trust and improves communication.
- g. Integrity of life opens the lines of communication.

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### 4. Improving Communication by Verbalizing the Mission of the Church.

- a. The mission statement of our church is...(your church’s mission statement.)
- b. We exist to complete this mission. Communicating our mission statement will help keep our church on track.
- c. Memorize our mission statement.
- d. Remind one another of its importance.
- e. We need to update our mission statement periodically.
- f. Live the mission statement.

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## 5. Improving Communication by Giving Grace to One Another.

- a. Value discipline and correction from others (Proverbs 12:12).
- b. Forgive one another because God, through Christ forgave you (Matt. 6:12).
- c. Seek reconciliation from everyone (Matt. 5:23-24).
- d. Love covers a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8).
- e. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt (Colossians 4:6).

## Section B. Improving Communication With Newcomers

### 1. Improving Communication by Explanation.

- a. Avoid the "Everyone Knows" Assumption
  - Ministry Names
    - Often times, ministries within the church are called by a name that only regular attendees understand.
    - One local church used the acronym FACT to describe a support group:
 

Freedom from  
Addictions by  
Christ's  
Transformation
    - To put in a bulletin that the FACT meeting is held on Thursday nights at 7 PM is simply not enough information for newcomers.
- b. Activity Times and Places (services, special events)
  - We must clearly communicate all times for services and special events. Imagine a newcomer wanting to attend, but coming at the wrong time.

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c. Traditions

- Traditional events or traditions within the services are important to explain to newcomers.

**Illustration:**

A woman entered a local Nazarene church for a special revival service. She sat by herself and listened intently. At the conclusion of the revival service, the speaker opened the altar to anyone who would like to pray.

This woman, obviously touched by the service, responded and came forward. She knelt down awkwardly looking to see if anyone else was around. Kneeling, she nervously looked around. Embarrassed that she did not know what to do at the altar, she quickly stood up, and exited the church. She did not return.

Rule of thumb: "When we think we have over communicated, we have just begun to communicate enough."

**2. Improving Communication through Listening, Conversation, and knowing the Scriptures.**

Read Acts 8:26-35

"Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road--the desert road--that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth." The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

- Philip listened to both the Spirit's prompting and the Ethiopian eunuch's questions.
  - Prayer is an important way to hear the promptings of the Spirit

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- We need to know that the Spirit is calling for action.
  - We need to hear peoples' questions and not only be concerned with our own agendas.
- b. Philip asked a question that started a conversation , “Do you understand what you are reading?”
- We can begin conversations by asking simple questions.
  - Many people come to know Christ through conversations with Christians.
  - Not all conversations have to be spiritual conversations.
  - Often spiritual questions arise from normal conversations.
- c. Philip was familiar with the Scriptures and as a result was able to point the Ethiopian eunuch to Jesus.
- We cannot have all the answers but we do need to be able to navigate the Scriptures.
  - Knowing the Scriptures helps us be more confident when we have spiritual conversations.
  - We need to be able to gauge how familiar a person is with the Bible.
  - Unlike the Ethiopian eunuch, many people today are not familiar with Scripture.

### 3. Communicate “we want you here.”

- a. Our ultimate goal is to give value to the newcomer.
- We show we value people by introducing ourselves to people we don't know.
  - After a friendship is begin it is important to invite newcomers out to lunch.
  - Find ways to connect the newcomer with other friends in the church.
- b. A sense that a newcomer is sincerely valued will bring them back.
- When people feel valued they feel like they belong.
  - After they person has been attending for a month or so stop thinking of them as a newcomer.

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## Section C. Improving Communication



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### 1. Improving Communication through Cultivating, Planting, and Reaping

- a. The hard work of evangelism is cultivating the Gospel in the lives of unbelievers (John 4:38).
- b. We are called to plant the seed of the gospel (1 Corinthians 3:6)
- c. We are called to reap a spiritual harvest that we may or may not have planted (John 4:35-38).

### 2. Communicate “Our church values people, and we make decisions on behalf of the people not here.”

- Kindness evangelism events are wonderful for this type of communication. Steve Sjogren in Conspiracy of Kindness suggests the following “Servant Evangelism Projects that Work” :

Do these acts of kindness away from your church, where people gather, with this simple statement, “God loves you, and so do the people at (your church name) Church of the Nazarene.”

- Umbrella escorts
- Windshield washing at a gas station
- Gift wrapping at Christmas
- Pen/Pencil giveaways at a college campus
- Soft drink giveaways
- Grocery cart return
- Leaf raking
- Change the oil in cars of single moms

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### 3. Improving Communication Using the “7 Touches, 3 Hearings” Method

- Elmer Towns has said that research demonstrates that most people do not respond to the Gospel until they have had seven loving touches by Christians and have heard the Gospel at least three times.

### 4. Improving Communication Using “Three Story Evangelism”

#### a. Listen to Their Story

- The first step in story evangelism is to listen.
- Listening earns the right to speak.
- Consider asking questions:
  - (i) Do you give much thought to God and spiritual things?
  - (ii) Tell me a little about your spiritual journey.☐
  - (iii) What was your earliest childhood memory of going to church?
  - (iv) Tell me about your most memorable spiritual experience.
  - (v) What do you think is a person’s greatest spiritual need?
  - (vi) When do you feel closest to God?

#### b. Relate Your Story

- Knowing their story, relate what God has done in your life in such a way that encourages them to want more of God.

#### c. Communicate His Story

- Use any number of methods to share God’s story of salvation.
  - (i) The Bridge to Life
  - (ii) Four Spiritual Laws
  - (iii) Evangelism Explosion

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### III. Small Group Work

Break the larger group into teams of four or five people. Have them answer the following questions:

1. What are some specific ways that we as a congregation can learn to communicate more effectively with one another?
2. What area of communication needs greatest improvement for our congregation to be more effective with newcomers?
3. What are specific ways our local church can communicate value to those outside our church?

### IV. Module Wrap-Up

Have individuals from the small groups share answers to the questions with the larger group.

Close in a prayer circle.

First, hold hands in a circle and pray for one another.

Second, turn so that the group is facing outwards, hold hands and pray for those outside your fellowship.

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